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Perlis ready to be catalyst to foster better border ties

SATUN (Thailand): The Perlis government is willing to become the “middleman” or catalyst to enhance relations between states in Malaysia which share the border with southern Thailand.

Perlis Border Security and Agriculture Committee Chairman, Ahmad Bakri Dajuk Ali said a permanent committee had first to be formed to plan effective activities and programmes. He was speaking to Bernama here in conjunction with the 2014 Thailand-Malaysia Under-18 Friendly Football Festival with Satun as the host.

The league tournament consisting of two groups began yesterday and will end on April 25. It sees participation from Perlis, Kedah and a team from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) while all five territories in southern Thailand – Satun, Narathiwat, Songkla, Pattani and Yala are also taking part.

Ahmad Bakri also thanked the office of the Governor of Satun which is providing the accommodation, food and transportation during the duration of festival to all the participating teams.

The programme had previously been under the IMT-GT (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand-Growth Triangle) but had not been carried out due to several factors besides Indonesia pulling out, he said.

He added that it was revived in 2011 on the initiative of the territories concerned on the basis of improving two-way understanding, security and economy, especially trade along the border, as well as tourism.

He said the permanent committee was needed so that a special allocation could be provided to mobilise the programme involving the five southern Thailand territories.

Besides the two-way relations, security, trade and tourism, the committee could also look at wider scopes and joint efforts.

“I hope the Perak, Kelantan and Penang governments would take this seriously because with the Northern Corridor Economic Region, there are many economic opportunities which could be

developed in the five territories.

“Our involvement in this programme has opened our eyes to the fact that international boundaries cannot separate the youths from having good relations and making them realise the common roots and the need to live in peace and harmony,” he said.

Ahmad Bakri said the committee could also play a role in assisting Malaysian entrepreneurs to market halal products which would be well received in the five territories in South Thailand where the majority were Muslims. – Bernama